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EDITORIAL COMMENT

Mr. Lehman and Miss Wille consider in their articles some principles and methods of a cooperative working relationship between the school social worker and the caseworker in the family service agency. These articles illustrate how service may be strengthened when each agency fully understands and accepts the other.

The Grosse Pointe, Michigan, study represents a needed contribution to the literature in school social work. School social workers recognize the need to assess in some concrete manner the results of their services in the schools. The Michigan group have evolved an interesting method of making such a study. The questions which they raise are pertinent and point toward further refinement of evaluative method. This article offers helpful suggestions to others who are attempting evaluation of service.

Each setting such as a school or hospital, carries with it particular significance unique to the nature of the setting itself. Difficulties of children in school often are accompanied by intense feelings on the part of the child, his parent and his teachers. The school social worker must understand and recognize how to give help with these feelings if service is to be fully effective. Mrs. Arbit has ably described some of the specifics to be understood in the process of work with child, parent, and teacher in the practice of school social work. This subject was chosen by Mrs. Arbit for particular study in her work in the "settings" course at the School of Social Work, University of Illinois.

Mrs. Dortort has vividly described to us how she felt during the in-service training program in the Philadelphia Schools as she gained further insight and understanding not only of herself but also of others. It is information of this kind which most effectively portrays to us the value of specialized training in order to meet the needs of children in the schools.

COOPERATIVE PRACTICE BETWEEN FAMILY AGENCIES AND THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM¹

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The exchange of knowledge is basic to the stream of human experience. The growth in understanding of human behavior has had profound effect, not only in the field of social work but also in other professions dealing with individual and group relationships. It is especially true in the field of education. The experience of school administrators in using the family service agency as a resource has proven to be one of the most effective ways of helping children who come from a family already threatened by a cluster of symptoms. There are, however, situations which do not lend themselves to referral and it became apparent that there is further need for casework service within the school setting. To fill this need a specialized service is provided within the framework of the educational system. The already established family service agency continues to function in the community in its traditional fashion. It is used by the school social worker to enrich the services provided by the school in the same way as the school is used by the family agency as an enrichment of its service.

I would assume that the school social worker and the caseworker in the family agency share in their professional relationship with the client according to the limitations each agency sets up. The school social worker limits his area of treatment to the child who is having difficulty within the school setting and brings parents into the treatment situation in relation to the child's needs in the school. The family caseworker's first concern is with the family and he enters the school setting in the same way he uses all resources of the community to strengthen the family. In their broad aspects, both programs can be said to be working toward a common goal of service to the community for the promotion of attitudes which create healthy family living. It is our objective here to explore and clarify, not our separate roles, but those areas of service in which there is mutual cooperation.

¹ Presented at a meeting of the National Association of School Social Workers, Joint Session with Family Service Association of America, 81st Annual Forum, National Conference of Social Work, Atlantic City, May, 1954.

Basic to this is the mutual respect and understanding of the values of each service, faith in the professional capacity of the worker in the other agency, and a recognition that the services are complementary.

As an executive of a family agency which works closely with school social workers, it seems fitting that in this paper I discuss the generic principles of the family agency, identify some of the problems of cooperation between the two agencies, identify ways in which the family agency can help strengthen the school social work program, and look at means that have been attempted in the areas of referral and coordination so that these two services can work together more effectively to help children.

The family agency, traditionally, is "prepared to give help with a wide range of problems such as unsatisfactory relationships between marriage partners or between parents and children; unsatisfactory development or behavior of children and adolescents; need for help with such matters as household management, work adjustments, vocational training; need for help in planning for the care of ill, handicapped, or aged individuals, or for the care of other family members at the time of illness, mental disturbances, desertion of a parent, and so forth."² This is a broad base and does not exclude working with a child in a family.

The relationship of each member of the family to the others is important and what one does effects all. While the home atmosphere effects the behavior of the child at school, it is equally true that the child's behavior can have strong effect on relationships at home.

In order to better understand, the family agency often looks to the school for help:

1. In developing *the study*, facts about the adjustment of a child in the school may well give a clearer picture of the family situation.
2. In the *psycho-social diagnosis*, psychological testing, regularly given in many schools, in addition to the school's description of symptomatic behavior can, at times, offer definitive help.
3. In the *formulation of plans*, important information touching on the reality or total plan for the family can often be provided by the school and finally,
4. In the *implementation or treatment* of the family, the school can be a powerful ally.

² Scope and Methods, later on page

Family agencies, more and more, are concerned with prevention and it has long been recognized that the client who voluntarily comes to the agency when difficulties begin is the more treatable. There is a growing awareness of this on the part of the community as well as an understanding of the importance of the early years of a child's life. The family agency, therefore, is often looked to for help by families with young children, often before these children have had any contact with the school. This is obviously a healthy situation.

On the other hand resistance to asking for help is often present in families which consider themselves closed corporations. The idea of asking for help with a family problem, not related to more obvious external problems, such as those created by the depression years, is not totally accepted. Their resistance in asking for service may not be overcome until such time as the behavior of their child in school makes obvious to those who are aware, that the behavior is a result of a family problem, at which time referral to the family agency may occur. We believe that the presence of the school social worker in the school increases the recognition of the problems of children and the relationship of these to family tensions, as well as making easier the referral to family service because of greater understanding.

It is clear from this that the programs are complementary, but they are also separate. Situations are brought to the attention of each agency and each must decide through study of the problem whether it or another agency is best able to serve the client. Once it is determined that the agency will accept the case, it will do so according to its own policy. However, very often joint service needs to be given, and coordination of effort is important so that lines are kept clear, treatment is focused in the same direction, and goals of treatment are understood by each.

Finding criteria for governing situations in which children should be seen by the school social worker or by the family agency is not easy. If a child feels anxiety with regard to his home situation, there is some reality factor in his being seen at the family agency. If, on the other hand, the child is acting out difficulties in the school even though they may stem from the family situation, he may more readily relate to treatment in the school. At this point there is need for consultation between the two agencies to decide which would best serve. From the family agency's point of view, the total family is the focus of the caseworker; however, two other factors need to be considered. One is the use of the caseworker's time where other community facilities exist and the other

is the responsibility of the family agency to draw on community resources to strengthen the family structure. We know that a child can use the relationship with the caseworker to draw on inner resources, whether in the family agency or with the school social worker.

Let us now explore referral. Parents come to both schools and family service agencies for the same reasons. When a parent comes to the family agency, not presenting his own problem but the problem of a child having difficulty in school, the family agency takes responsibility for exploring the total situation and often finds that tensions resulting from difficult interpersonal relationships may be clarified for the parent so that he begins treatment for himself. When the parent comes to the school, the school social worker must take the same responsibility, and this may lead to referral to the family agency. When the school is the source of the referral, the family agency feels it can do a better, and more skillful job, if the parent understands why he has been referred to the agency. This is accomplished by the school social worker when he helps the parents to recognize family tensions and the possibility of having help with them.

The family agency can be more ready to help a client if it is aware that the client is coming and if it knows something about the problem as seen by the school social worker. It is, therefore, of great importance that the family agency be given information by the school social worker before the client appears, preferably by the usual written summary and, if necessary, a conference.

A school social worker may find it necessary to discuss family problems as they are related to the child's school difficulties. When parents show little inclination to work out solutions to their own difficulties produced by family tensions, the school social worker may need to continue to discuss these as they are reflected by the child's behavior, and also guide the parents to the place where they can recognize need for help in their own interpersonal relations.

In the same way, family agencies may be working with a family with the objective of helping the parents develop their strengths and capacities to handle their own problems and those of their children's school relationship. Where the family agency feels that the school social worker can be an additional resource to the family, the agency takes the responsibility of interpreting the school social worker's role.

Let us look more critically at referrals of family agencies to school social workers. A study of these reveals three kinds of referrals:

1. Those in which a parent describes behavior problems:

- (a) One of these are symptoms of withdrawal in a child. The family agency needs to be aware that such a child may not come to the attention of the school social worker by referral from a teacher because often the teacher is unaware that this is a problem serious enough to require treatment. Such a referral, in addition to ascertaining for the family agency the reality situation from a professionally qualified person, helps the school social worker in the interpretation to teachers of the need for treatment of such children.
- (b) The other behavior problem discussed in the course of treatment, are difficulties of children in school which disturb the normal function of the classroom. Such acting out behavior is most often already recognized by the school, and the family agency will frequently discover that the case is already known to the school social worker. It cannot, therefore, be called a referral but indication of need for conference and possible cooperative casework is clear.

2. Those in which a family agency is carrying a family supportively, over a period of time: Additional support to strengthen the child's positive experiences can often be developed in the school. The school social worker can be most useful in mobilizing the resources of the school for the benefit of such a child and this should be followed by continuing consultation with the school social worker.
3. Those in which the family agency is sought out by a family facing a major crisis. Where there are children in such a family, the family worker is aware that such a crisis will have its effect on the children in the family, which may appear in the school situation.

The following case illustrates a referral by the family agency, and cooperative casework with the school social worker resulting in help to a family in a crisis situation:

Mr. B. came to the family agency for help when his wife was arrested for drunken driving. This episode climaxed a series of incidents, indicative of a serious disregard on the part of Mrs. B. for the welfare of the children and her responsibility within the family. Social acceptance of Mrs. B. in the community was limited to occasional visits to her husband's friends. Routine housekeeping tasks were ignored and the only recognition of maternal responsibility was evident in her willingness to maintain a schedule of driving the children to school, to music and dancing lessons and attending all school programs. She felt a degree

of satisfaction in this limited acting of the role of a devoted mother. In spite of two years of such deprivation, the children had good school adjustment and were at ease in teacher classmate relationship.

At the suggestion of the family agency, Mrs. B. consulted a psychiatrist who advised the agency that Mrs. B. was essentially a narcissistic personality, not capable of developing deep emotional relationships. She had no concern about what was happening to her family and he added that her actions in the near future would be completely unpredictable. She refused to accept treatment and renewed her previous pattern of setting deadline dates for her departure on a year's vacation, finally focusing on the week after Christmas.

At this point, with the father's consent, a conference was held with the school social worker. A discussion of the background information resulted in a decision to maintain an alert supervision of the children, enlisting the cooperation of the teachers. Two days later the school social worker reported that the younger children seemed to be having no difficulties in their relationship, either with other children or in their work at school, but that the older child, Gale, an extremely sensitive girl with a high intelligence, had recently been writing compositions in English class which described a home situation similar to that reported to the family caseworker by the father. In consultation it was decided that the school social worker would see Gale regularly to give her the opportunity of expressing her feelings about the whole situation, both to relieve her of the need of expressing herself publicly and to help Gale supportively through a positive relationship in the event her mother deserted. This decision to have Gale see the school social worker rested on two aspects of the total situation. First, Gale had, in the school, the only really stable area—one in which the positive factors were sufficient to enable her to accept strong relationship with the caseworker entirely apart from the influence of family disintegration. Second, it was felt that a relationship by the family caseworker with Gale would serve to undermine the mother's maternal responsibility and no doubt precipitate a crisis while the school social worker could move without undo emphasis.

Shortly after New Years the mother disappeared, leaving a note which Gale found and read in which the mother said she was going to California with another man. Gale was ambivalent as to whether her father should see this letter.

Through the school social worker's support of Gale and the family agency's support of the father, the information was given to him and plans worked out for the care of the family while the father, with the caseworker's help, arrived at decisions as to steps which he should take in view of the reality situation.

It is unquestionable that this crisis will leave a serious mark upon this family but because of cooperative action of the two agencies, the crisis did not break apart the family. Two sources of support made it possible for the father to maintain the integrity of the family unit and carried Gale, by virtue of her relationship with the school social worker in the safe area of her school, to the resolution of a crucial emotional situation and to the acceptance of a daughter's role, preventing excessive assumption of maternal responsibility.

In the cooperative relationship between a family agency and the school, through the school social worker, our major concern is communication, one with the other. It is the base upon which cooperation can be secured.

The first step in cooperation for each case is to clarify the areas of function of each agency. Secondly, upon agreement to carry a case cooperatively, regular time should be set apart on the calendar for consultation on the progress of each case. Thirdly, workers need to agree on goals.

It seems important to pause here to point up these goals of family agencies and school social workers. While the setting is different, I believe there will be agreement that the goal of treatment is "(1) to support or maintain the client's current strengths by helping him mobilize capacity and resources to meet his current life situation, and (2) to modify the client's attitudes and patterns of behavior by increasing his understanding of himself, of his problems, and of his part in creating them."³

One of the purposes of consultation becomes clearer as we recognize the need to explore within the goals, what each caseworker hopes to accomplish in relation to each individual based on an evaluation of that individual's capacity to use help.

In the B. case, each social worker knew the function of the other; regular weekly conferences were set up in addition to each worker being available in emergency; and common goals were clearly defined and limited.

One of the most effective forms of cooperation is done through interpretation to total school personnel. Our agency has recently experimented with one school district in a method of arriving at better understanding of both the function of the family agency and of the school social worker. The executive of the family agency and the superintendent of schools agreed that an informal meeting once a month might prove helpful. Those invited to the initial meeting, in addition to the representatives of the family agency, were the principals of four schools, the school social worker, and three teachers who specialize in problems of exceptional children. At first there was general discussion of the role of each in helping children in their adjustments. As the meetings continued, other teachers were brought in to present cases in their own

³ Scope and Methods, page

classes for discussion. The usual custom of disguising cases to maintain confidentiality was taken. In this way a variety of problems were covered, each participant was able to show how his special area could be brought to bear in helping a child. The teachers who participated had a clearer understanding of the resources available to them and when and how to use them.

The result has been that the school social worker reports that teachers have become more aware of the needs of the children under their care and have made more appropriate referrals. In turn, the family agency felt that there were more referrals by the school social worker of clients who were ready to use the service offered, and who moved rapidly into treatment.

We have shown some of the general aspects of cooperative practice between two social work settings. These follow generally accepted practice within the limitations of the particular settings. What is new is that the use of the school as a social work setting has been spreading within recent years and its place in the constellation of agencies as seen from the family agency viewpoint can be further integrated. Family agency service is also becoming more widespread and together they must take individual and mutual responsibility for interpretation to the end of greater understanding of each other, and by the community.

COOPERATIVE PRACTICE BETWEEN FAMILY SERVICE WORKERS AND SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES¹

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We have represented here today two of the most important institutions in the child's life—the family and the school. Mr. Lehmann has emphasized the importance of the family to the wholesome development of the child. In addition to the family we see in our American culture today evidence on every hand of the importance of the school, not only because of its contribution to the child's acquisition of knowledge, skills and ability, but because of the meaning of school success to the child's feeling about himself.

It would be well to explore what is meant by school success at the present time. We no longer think of school success in terms of academic achievement alone, but recognize that the school has assumed responsibility for helping children to attain personal adequacy and satisfactions in social relations. Educators are no longer interested in intellectual attainments alone but are recognizing that the use a child makes of his learning, his personal well-being, his ability to get along well with others and to make a contribution to society is a part of the learning itself. The White House Conference of 1950 gave emphasis to the social aspects of learning in the statement that "all learnings are social in nature, and are to be valued only in as far as they help make a kind of person who contributes richly, at best creatively, in his social milieu, and finds his basic satisfactions—and so happiness—in so doing."²

Psychologists and psychiatrists have stressed that often academic and social learning are impeded because of emotional factors. Consistent with this viewpoint is the school's recognition that in order to fulfill its objective it must of necessity be aware of and attempt to modify emotional

¹ Presented at a meeting of the National Association of School Social Workers, Joint Session with Family Service Association of America, 81st Annual Forum, National Conference of Social Work, Atlantic City, May, 1954.

² *Personality in the Making*, Witmer, Helen Leland, and Kotinsky, Ruth, Harper Bros., New York, 1952, p. 238.

difficulties which affect learning. It is within this philosophy of education that the school has turned to other professions; medicine, psychology, and social work for specialized help for those children who have difficulty in benefiting from their school experiences.

The school social worker's unique contribution to the schools lies in his direct service to children and parents of those children who are experiencing difficulty in making the fullest use of their school opportunities. Such difficulties range from an impairment of some areas of the child's functioning to an almost total inability to make constructive use of the school. In his work with the child and parent, the school social worker is alert to the factors which have blocked the learning (as conceived in its broadest sense) of the child.

For many children the casework relationship with the school social worker provides the kind of experience in which they begin to "take hold," that is to find satisfaction in areas in which they were blocked. This satisfaction may help these children to maintain an equilibrium in spite of other tensions. In some of these cases the primary tension may have been related to the school. There are other children whose maintenance of adequate school functioning hinges on a balance which is threatened by external circumstances within their homes. Often the school social worker is able to help the parents to understand the inter-relatedness of the home problem and the anxieties which a child carries with him from home to school. Through the school social worker's help, the parent may modify attitudes towards the child or work through minor family problems which affect the child in school.

When the parents' difficulties are of such a nature that help through other community services is indicated to effect a more favorable home environment for the child, the school social worker turns his efforts toward making possible the use of such services. These difficulties would include such problems as health conditions, marital difficulties, economic deprivations, mental illness, and others which interfere with harmonious family living described in detail by Mr. Lehmann. At the present time, schools are recognizing increasingly problems in those families in which the parents were separated during the period of infancy and pre-school years of their children by war-time conditions. These parents are experiencing difficulty in building effective marital and parent-child relationships. Their needs seem to fall clearly within the function of a Family Service agency. Another group of families frequently seen by the school social worker as needing the services of the family agency is

those families whose problems are related to the pressures they are experiencing in their efforts to provide adequately for their children. The increase in the number of working mothers has been accompanied by an increase in the number of children who have felt keenly their difference in not having a parent at home to provide the care all children need as they attend school. School social workers are often able to help these parents to recognize their need for family agency service in order to get assistance with planning and budgeting so that financial responsibilities are met and family unity is maintained.

Helping families to utilize the services of another agency required full understanding of the meaning to a particular parent of asking for help. This is an important area of the school social worker's service. In addition to understanding how to help parents with their feelings toward use of agency services, the school social worker must have full knowledge of the services of community agencies in order to help the parent move toward the appropriate agency. The importance of this skill cannot be overemphasized. The school social worker is in a strategic position to help parents who may become aware, for the first time, of their need for help as they discuss the difficulties of their children with a professional social caseworker in the school setting.

In the process of casework service related to difficulties of children in school, parents frequently discuss other concerns centered on family problems. Sometimes these concerns are of a transitory nature, but often they persist. Parents, who have been overwhelmed and caught in a maze of apparently insurmountable pressures, sometimes find that an experience of using casework help in the school setting serves to partialize the total problem. When the parent begins to find some degree of adequacy in working through difficulties related to problems of his child-in-school, he begins to have some confidence in his capacity to cope with other difficulties. Parents who have been helped by the school social worker to recognize that community agencies offer specific services related to their particular need may then move into this next experience of asking for help in a positive way. Recently, a mother, who had experienced help through her contacts with a school social worker who was helping her with school problems of an eleven-year-old daughter, began to understand that much of her difficulty with this child was related to a marital problem. The school social worker and the mother recognized that the mother's continued concerns with other aspects of her family life were not concerns with which the school social worker should offer help in view of the school's specific function. Although this mother had been

able to relate to the school social worker easily, since she felt that within the school setting it was socially acceptable to use service, it took a period of weeks before she could feel right about making an appointment with the Family Service in the community. When the mother finally decided that her desire for change was stronger than her superficial concerns about her family might think, she made an appointment. Following her first interview, she wrote a note to the school social worker expressing her satisfaction with a family service worker "who understood in the same way that you did."

Mr. Lehmann has emphasized important principles of cooperative work between the family agency worker and the school social worker—those of mutual understanding and respect, initial definition of responsibility, later evaluation to determine the progress and to re-focus, if necessary, or to consider utilization of other appropriate services. The school social worker has a particular responsibility to interpret to all school personnel the continuing service given in individual cases. Regardless of the general interpretation of the agency which has been given to the schools, the school social worker helps the teachers to understand the work of the agency in regard to particular children. This is done with the consent of the parents in instances in which the problems are related to concerns of the school.

One of the difficulties which sometimes interferes with effective cooperative work arises out of the difference in focus of the school and family agency. This becomes particularly acute when the child being considered is one who creates problem in the school. In such cases, the school may expect the family agency to effect immediate change or to make decisions which rightly belong to the school. When an individual child's behavior is so aggressive within the group that learning for all children is hampered, the school administration may make a decision to remove such a child, at least temporarily from the school. In such instances the school sometimes makes unrealistic demands on the agency pressing for specific assurance that the child's behavior must be changed or asking for decisions regarding school placement. Such specific demands not only interfere with the service which the family agency gives to the family, but places the agency in a position of making decisions which rightfully belong in the area of the educator. When a family is working toward improving family relationships, shifting of the role of the family worker to one in which he is placed in the position of having to ally with the school's authority is not only confusing for the parent but detracts from the family agency's primary purpose. The school social

worker needs to be aware of the feeling aroused in the school by these difficult children and to understand that his feeling grows in part out of concern for the total group of children whose learning is affected. In such instances the school social worker has specific responsibilities. One is to help the school to understand and continue to carry its own legal and educational responsibility. She also helps the parents to work with the school on a plan consistent with school requirements and helps the child to modify his behavior and accept decisions of the school and use them constructively.

In many instances the school social worker and the family service worker give direct service concurrently. This is appropriate because of the different focus of each. It is important as parents work on family problems that they maintain their status and responsibility as parents of children-in-school, talking with the teacher, attending P.-T. A. meetings and if indicated, using school social service.

Mrs. Smith, a mother of five children in school, at various times had worked with the school social worker to help her children find satisfaction in school. The first contact of the school social worker with Mrs. Smith was because of Betty, age 15, the oldest daughter, who had become disinterested in school after a prolonged illness of rheumatic fever. The school social worker had regular interviews with Betty and helped her to find satisfactions in school related to her own goals. The school social worker also helped Mrs. Smith to give Betty more responsibilities and privileges and to have an increased understanding of Betty's needs as a teen-ager. Later Mrs. Smith asked the school social worker to help with Raymond, age 10, who was having difficulty with his school work and was sensitive to the teasing of his classmates. Shortly after the school social worker began helping Mrs. Smith to be more able to cope with Raymond's difficulties, Mrs. Smith began to discuss marital difficulties which she recognized were affecting the home life to such an extent that she was irritable and all the children were anxious because of the tension in the home. After several interviews in which Mrs. Smith continued to point up the seriousness of the marital difficulty and her inability to cope with it, she decided, with the help of the school social worker, to request help of the Family Service which the school social worker described as an agency which could help her with this problem.

Mrs. Smith was somewhat disappointed after her first interview since the Family Service wanted to see Mr. Smith also, and she did not feel that this would help. The school social worker discussed with Mrs.

Smith the unsatisfactory present situation as Mrs. Smith herself saw it and suggested that Mrs. Smith, who wanted change, might continue to work with the agency and share with the agency her doubts. Mrs. Smith agreed that the present conditions were intolerable and thought she could continue with Family Service. After the next interview with Family Service, Mrs. Smith phoned the school social worker to talk with her about Raymond's improvement in his school work and the lessening of his complaints about other children. Mrs. Smith added that she had kept her appointment with Family Service and Mr. Smith also had agreed to see the caseworker. During a period of some months, Mrs. Smith continued to work with the family agency and also with the school social worker. She no longer dwelt on marital difficulties when she talked with the school social worker, but occasionally mentioned that she and Mr. Smith were getting along better. Mrs. Smith was quite willing for the school social worker to talk with the Family Service worker, and at one point when a temporary crisis affected the family again, she asked the Family Service worker to call the school social worker to interpret what had happened. Both the Family Service worker and the school social worker recognized that Mrs. Smith's continued feeling of adequacy, as she worked on the problems of her children, represented a strength which helped her to work in a more insecure area—that of her relationship with her husband.

Another area of cooperative work is illustrated in the Smith case. It is not unusual for a client to find it difficult to accept the services of a new agency. When Mrs. Smith raised question about the procedure of Family Service, the school social worker helped her to return to the agency. Social workers recognize that complaints often reflect the ambivalent feelings of the client who is experiencing resistance in taking responsibility toward change. When a client has positive feelings towards the school social worker, the worker is in a good position to help the client overcome this resistance.

Family service workers also receive unfavorable criticisms about the school. These criticisms frequently represent an over-reaction to a disciplinary situation—the inability of the parent to accept a teacher's estimate of his child's progress, or a generalized critical attitude towards the school. The family service worker may recognize the motivation or the need which underlies such criticism of the school. Determining the reality conditions through use of a school social worker is desirable. If parents' complaints are excessive, it is often important to help the parent to approach the school in a positive way, requesting help of the school

social worker if children are having difficulty. It requires a high degree of understanding on the part of all social caseworkers to assess the reality conditions, at the same time helping parents with their negative feelings sufficiently to permit moving out of the impasse which sometimes arises.

School social workers and family service workers, as they work together cooperatively, increase their understanding of their respective roles towards parents and children with school and family difficulties and together they come to achieve a realization of how each service can strengthen its own contribution as it makes discriminating and full use of the other service.

AN EVALUATION OF VISITING TEACHER WORK THROUGH THE STUDY OF MOVEMENT

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To prepare for the tenth anniversary of the Visiting Teacher Program in Michigan, plans were made to study what had happened to visiting teacher practice during its years of operation in the State. The State was divided into four regions, each region being assigned a topic to be reported on at the annual State Workshop in November of 1953. The Northeastern region of the State was assigned the topic of evaluation. This region consisted of the suburban communities to the north and east of Detroit, plus half of the Detroit Visiting Teachers. Thus, the group consisted of some thirty visiting teachers representing thirteen communities. Out of the original number of thirty visiting teachers assigned to the group, fourteen continued an active interest in the study.

To evaluate visiting teacher work, the Northeastern study group used the concept of movement. This approach was suggested by J. McVicker Hunt and Leonard Kogan in their study for the Family Service Association of America on "Measuring Results in Social Case Work: A Manual for Judging Movement."¹ Hunt and Kogan define movement as "the change that occurs in an individual client and/or his environment between the opening and closing of his case."² The authors explain that they use the concept of movement because it is universally understood and used by casework practitioners. Their decision to use the judgment of caseworkers as to movement was explained by them as the result of preliminary studies which led them to believe the judgment of caseworkers is a "fairly reliable measuring tool."³ Hunt and Kogan use four categories to measure movement:

1. "Change in the client's adaptive efficiency, such as his ability to get along with other people. . . .
2. "Change in the client's disabling habits and conditions, such as in personality traits, basic emotional conflicts. . . .

¹ David G. French, "An Approach to Measuring Results in Social Work," pp. 141-151.

² Ibid., p. 141.

³ Ibid., p. 142.

3. "Change in the client's verbalized attitudes and understanding, such as accepting counsel. . . .
4. "Change in the client's environmental circumstances, such as the behavior of other people toward the client. . . ."⁴

In the Improvement Rating Scale which was devised, we were attempting to measure the movement which took place between the beginning and a stated time in a visiting teacher case. In order to determine movement eight questions were formulated, covering areas of adjustment which we felt were commonly applicable to visiting teacher work. The eight questions were suggested by the four categories used in the Hunt and Kogan study. For instance the first two questions:

1. Has the child improved in his ability to get along with persons in authority, and
2. Has the child improved in his ability to get along with his peers, were suggested by Hunt and Kogan's first category related to adaptive efficiency.

The next question:

3. Has the child increased in his use of his intellectual potentials, is related to Hunt and Kogan's second category of change in the client's disabling habits and conditions.

The fourth and fifth questions:

4. Has the child grown in his ability to admit and talk about his problem, and
 5. Has the child shown growth in understanding the relationship between his attitudes and feelings and his behavior,
- were related to Hunt and Kogan's third category, change in the client's verbalized attitudes and understanding.

The last three questions:

6. Has the attitude of the child's family toward him changed,
 7. Has the attitude of school personnel toward him changed, and
 8. Has the attitude of other children toward him changed,
- were related to Hunt and Kogan's fourth category, change in the client's environmental circumstances. We realize our tool is not scientifically constructed, nor tested for reliability.

Each visiting teacher was given directions for the systematic selec-

⁴ Ibid., p. 144.

tion of five cases from his case load of January 31, 1953. Following are the directions for the use of the scale:

"The Improvement Rating Scale is to be filled out by the visiting teacher on the basis of comparison of the child's adjustment at the time of referral and his adjustment either at the time of closing, if the case is closed, or as of May, 1953, if the case is still open. Circle the appropriate answer. It is assumed that the visiting teacher will talk with school personnel involved about a child's present adjustment before the Improvement Scale is filled out. If you truly feel any question does not apply in a given situation, write, does not apply, and do not attempt to answer the question. In scoring, use the following values:

Pronounced Retrogression-2
Some Retrogression-1
No Change 0
Little Improvement+1
Some Improvement+2
Marked Improvement+3

Total the score yourself and place it in the space provided. Lowest score possible is -16; highest, + 24."

The highest possible score for the eight parts of the scale is 24, indicating marked improvement in all areas. Of the 69 case studies, 16, or 23.2% had a score of 17 to 24. These we considered showed marked improvement. Thirty cases, or 43.5%, fell between the scores of 9 and 16, showing some improvement. Twenty-two cases, or 31%, ranged from scores of 2 to 8, indicating little improvement. One case had a negative one score, indicating some retrogression. From the total results we can conclude that in the majority of cases studied, the visiting teacher felt there was significant improvement. We would like to feel that this improvement could be attributed to the visiting teacher's activity in the case. However, we realize that further study is necessary to substantiate this claim.

In order to determine whether any area of adjustment, represented by the eight questions which make up the scale, showed more change than another, the average improvement score for the 69 cases in the eight areas was found. It should be noted all of the averages range between 1.13 and 1.83, or between "little" and "some" improvement by our method of evaluation. Since the differentiation is so slight, the

IMPROVEMENT RATING SCALE*

Case Number of Child Total Score.....

1. Has the child improved in his ability to get along with persons in authority?

Pronounced	Some	No	Little	Some	Marked
Retrogression	Retrogression	Change	Improvement	Improvement	Improvement
2. Has the child improved in his ability to get along with his peers?

Pronounced	Some	No	Little	Some	Marked
Retrogression	Retrogression	Change	Improvement	Improvement	Improvement
3. Has the child increased his use of his intellectual potentialities?

Pronounced	Some	No	Little	Some	Marked
Retrogression	Retrogression	Change	Improvement	Improvement	Improvement
4. Has the child grown in his ability to admit and talk about his problems?

Pronounced	Some	No	Little	Some	Marked
Retrogression	Retrogression	Change	Improvement	Improvement	Improvement
5. Has the child shown growth in understanding the relationship between his attitudes and feelings and his behavior?

Pronounced	Some	No	Little	Some	Marked
Retrogression	Retrogression	Change	Improvement	Improvement	Improvement
6. Has the attitude of the child's family toward him changed?

Pronounced	Some	No	Little	Some	Marked
Retrogression	Retrogression	Change	Improvement	Improvement	Improvement
7. Has the attitude of school personnel toward the child changed?

Pronounced	Some	No	Little	Some	Marked
Retrogression	Retrogression	Change	Improvement	Improvement	Improvement
8. Has the attitude of other children toward him changed?

Pronounced	Some	No	Little	Some	Marked
Retrogression	Retrogression	Change	Improvement	Improvement	Improvement

* Devised by the Grosse Pointe Visiting Teacher Department, Carolyn Wheeler and Joseph Hourihan.

validity of this part of the study may be questioned. However, the rank order of average improvement scores raises some interesting points:

<i>Average Improvement Score</i>	<i>Area of Adjustment</i>
1.83	Attitude of school personnel toward child.
1.70	Ability of child to get along with persons in authority.
1.56	Ability of child to get along with his peers.

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1.55 | Ability of child to admit and talk about his problems. |
| 1.40 | Attitude of other children toward the child. |
| 1.36 | Increase by child of his use of his intellectual potential. |
| 1.15 | Attitude of child's family toward child. |
| 1.13 | Understanding by the child of the relationship between his attitudes and feelings and his behavior. |

The greatest improvement is in the area "attitude of school personnel toward the child." This might indicate that the visiting teacher's most significant work is done with other school personnel. The second area in rank order of improvement, "ability of child to get along with persons in authority," would appear to be closely correlated with the first, and might easily be the result of positive changes in the first area.

It would seem that one of the main objectives of the visiting teacher is to help children admit and discuss their problems, yet this area ranks fourth in the average improvement scores. "Understanding by the child of the relationship between his attitudes and feelings and his behavior," we might expect to be closely correlated to the ability of the child to admit and discuss his problems yet this ranks eighth in the average improvement scores. These results suggest that the visiting teachers' personal work with children needs to be constantly studied and re-evaluated to improve our techniques.

The fact that "attitude of child's family toward the child," shows such a low rank order of improvement should be a matter of concern and further inquiry.

To each Improvement Rating Scale was attached a questionnaire as to the basic descriptive material about the child—his age, grade, sex, and intellectual ability; and as to the role that the visiting teacher took in the case. Did the visiting teacher work with the child personally? What responsibility did the visiting teacher carry for home and school contacts? What school and community resources were used in a given case? The purpose here was two-fold: first, we wished to see what is common visiting teacher practice in the handling of a case; second, we wished to see if there was any correlation between the way a visiting teacher case is handled and the amount of movement shown in that particular case. For the purpose of summary and comparison, the descriptive

material and the material relating to the handling of the case was tabulated relative to the degree of change noted—that is, the cases were sorted according to the score and tabulation made from the highest score down to the lowest. The 46 cases which had improvement scores from 9 to 24 were termed the "Improved Group". The Improved Group represents 66.7% of the total 69 cases studied. The 23 cases which showed scores from —1 to 8 were considered unimproved. The Unimproved Group represents 33.3% of the total number studied. Henceforth the comparisons made between the Improved and Unimproved Groups will refer to these figures.

Case number of child..... Age..... Grade..... Sex I. Q.....
 Problem as referred:

1. Was this child seen by the Visiting Teacher personally? If so,
 How long were the interviews?
 How frequent were the interviews?
 How many interviews (in months)?
 2. Teacher contacts:
 How frequent were teacher contacts?
 3. Home contacts:
 Did the Visiting Teacher carry the responsibility for home contacts?
 If so, where did the interviews take place?
 How frequent were the contacts?
 4. Were other resources within the school used? If so, which ones?
 5. Were other resources within the community used? If so, which ones?
-
-

In comparing the age of the Improved and Unimproved groups, it is noted that 32 cases, or 69.5% of the total 46 Improved Cases, fall in the 7 to 12 year age range, with the peak, 13 cases or 28.2%, at the height of latency from 9 to 10 years of age. The Unimproved Group showed a steady line of failure, with 4 cases, or 17.8% of the total 23 Unimproved cases, at each age level until age 15. The comparison of grade levels of the Improved and Unimproved groups is in keeping with that of age levels. The results suggest that, if improvement is going to take place, it will be easiest to effect, in the latency age range, but that there may be other factors such as the nature of the child's problem exclusive of his age which makes improvement difficult to produce.

The division of sex in the total 69 cases studied is about the same as has been found in other studies of children referred for special help. Forty-eight, or 69.5%, of the total number of cases were boys, and 21, or 30.5%, were girls. In the Improved Group 29, or 63% were boys, and 17 or 37% were girls. In the Unimproved Group 19, or 83%, were boys and 4, or 17%, were girls. This would indicate we should study further to find out if improvement is harder to effect among boys than girls.

The comparison of intelligence between the Improved and Unimproved Groups is interesting in its variance. In the Improved Group the most marked success concurred with average intelligence. Twenty-seven, or 58.6% of the 46 Improved Cases had I. Q.'s between 85 and 115, with 10 or 21.7% of these in the 95 to 105 I. Q. range. In contrast, the Unimproved Group had a significantly high number of children with either low or high intelligence. Seven children, or 30.4% of the total 23 Unimproved Group, had I. Q.'s of 85 or less while six, or 26.1%, had I. Q.'s of 115 or above. This would suggest again that the nature of the problem needs to be studied in relation to improvement.

In analyzing what is common visiting teacher practice in the handling of the 69 cases studied, it was found in 67 cases the child was seen personally by the visiting teacher, that the most frequent length of interview was 30 minutes, and the most frequent interval was weekly interviews. There was so little difference in the Improved and Unimproved Groups in these areas that we can only conclude that neither length or frequency of contact affect improvement or non-improvement.

In all of the 69 cases studied, the visiting teacher had contact with the teacher, although the frequency of the contacts ranged from one per term to one or two per week. Weekly or bi-weekly contacts were most frequent, occurring in 42 cases, or 60.8% of the total 69. Among the Improved Group weekly or bi-weekly contacts occurred in 27 cases, or 58.7% of the total 46 cases, while in the Unimproved Group weekly or bi-weekly contacts occurred in 15 cases, or 65.1% of the 26 cases. This might suggest that in the more troublesome cases, more attention is paid to teacher contacts.

Of the total 69 cases studied, in 58 cases, or 84%, the homes were contacted by the visiting teacher personally. In the eleven cases where the visiting teacher did not make personnel contact with the home, there were four cases where the visiting teacher knew another person was carrying this responsibility. In two cases the explanation was given that

the school did not think it advisable to contact the home because of illness or other reasons. In one case the parents refused contact with the visiting teacher, and in two cases the child refused the visiting teacher permission to contact the home. In two cases no explanation was given for failure to contact the home. This would indicate that in most cases the visiting teacher accepts the responsibility for contact with the home, although this is not as universal as contacts with the teacher.

In 40 cases, or 86.9% of the Improved Group, the home was contacted by the visiting teacher, and in 18, or 78.3% of the 23 Unimproved Group. Although the difference in these percentages is not great, taken in conjunction with the fact that the area "change in attitude of the child's family toward the child" ranked seventh in improvement suggests that we should study more thoroughly our role and techniques with parents.

The frequency of contacts with parents ranged from one per week to one per year, with three or four times a semester being the most usual interval. Because we were especially interested in the place of parent interviews, this item was included on our questionnaire. In 26 cases, or 44.8% of the 58 where the visiting teacher carried the responsibility for home contacts, the interviews took place at the school or office. In 24 cases, or 41.4% of the 58 cases, the interviews took place in the home. In 8 cases, or 6.8% of the 58, the interviews took place at home and at school.

In examining school resources used, it was found that outside of the classroom teacher and principal, a variety of 15 school resources were used: attendance officer, safety patrol, tutoring, speech clinic, recreation department, school camp, school play, glee club, special art class, Parent-Teacher Association, special education department, counselor, health services, psychological department, and departmental teachers. As many as five school resources were used in a single case.

In 36 cases, or 52.2% of the total 69 cases studied, school resources were used. In the Improved Group 22, or 47.8% of the 46 cases, school resources were used, and in the Unimproved Group, 14 or 60.7% of the 23 cases, school resources were used. As with teacher contacts, this might suggest that in the troublesome cases, the visiting teacher draws upon the school resources more heavily.

A variety of 33 community resources were mentioned as having been used, including casework agencies, both public and private, medical

services, recreation groups, employment services, and religious groups. As many as eight agencies were listed for a single case. In 38 cases, or 55.1% of the total 69 cases studied, community resources were used. In four other cases it was noted that attempts to use community agencies had been made but had failed. There was no significant difference in the use of community resources between the Improved and Unimproved Groups. In 25 cases, or 54.3% of the 46 Improved Group, community resources were used, and in 13, or 55.5% of the 23 Unimproved Group, community resources were used.

It is realized that from the small number of cases studied, any conclusions drawn must be tentative and perhaps just point the direction for further investigation.

1. In the majority of cases studied, it was felt there was significant improvement and it is assumed that the work of the visiting teacher helped affect this improvement.
2. The rank order of the areas showing amount of improvement apparently correlate with the amount of work the visiting teacher puts in that area. The area ranking first in improvement is "the attitude of school personnel toward the child," and in all cases the visiting teacher had contact with the school personnel. The area which ranked seventh in improvement was "attitude of the child's family toward the child," and in only 84% of the cases did the visiting teacher contact the home. It is natural that work with school personnel is considered an integral part of a visiting teacher's work, but perhaps the function and scope of the visiting teacher's work with parents needs to be studied in more detail.
3. In this study it was apparently easiest to effect improvement in a female child of average intelligence within the latency age group. The lack of pattern in the Unimproved Group in age or intelligence suggests an unexamined factor, possibly the nature of the problem of the child. Although we had included a column, Problem as Referred, it was found this was not sufficient to help us understand this factor, and that perhaps a category of problems should have been set up to correlate with Improvement.
4. Within this study, it was common practice for the visiting teacher to see the child for a 30 to 40 minute interview weekly or bi-weekly. The teacher was seen in all cases, and although the amount of time spent in this area varied, weekly or bi-weekly

contacts were most common. Parents were seen in 84% of the cases, the interviews taking place either at home or at school. Use of school and community resources were less common, although still used in over 50% of the cases studied.

5. Although a study of this kind serves a purpose in pointing up general conclusions and questions, the detailed study of the case material involved would allow a more critical examination of those factors which cannot be reduced to statistics so easily: the dynamics of the problem, and the casework skill of the individual visiting teacher in the many facets of her job.

FEELINGS WHICH SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS MUST UNDERSTAND

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How often have we, as students of social work, heard of the importance of understanding and accepting the real feelings of the person as we try to help a client? This is a statement students hear almost from their first day in class and to which they give lip service. By this I mean that they accept the statement and incorporate it within their memories, vocabularies, and ultimately their thinking and understanding. In the midst of my third semester of graduate training for social casework, I think I am just beginning to achieve a real understanding of what this means, an understanding which can only be gained through applying the statement to clients. Early attempts to "understand and accept feelings" are almost of necessity feeble, uncertain, tentative, for this is a terribly difficult precept to comprehend and follow. But with each application, however faltering, the student will see the client's reaction and will learn from it; his new learning will help him in each new attempt. As he gains skill his attempts become less feeble, uncertain, and tentative. He grows more self-confident, too, as he experiences in his supervisory relationship how it feels to have *his* feelings understood and accepted. Until one day it begins to dawn upon him that these words have an almost astonishing meaning, and that social work help is based upon understanding acceptance of people's feelings.

But these are general statements with as little meaning to the reader perhaps as the initial statement held for the beginning student. Let me try to give meaning to the above with illustrations from my practice of school social work. What are these feelings which must be understood and accepted if a client is to be helped with his difficulties? Since the focus of the school social worker is the child who, for one reason or another, is unable to make good use of or participate in the school situation, I shall begin with the child's feelings.

We can expect that the child will feel afraid of this new situation. He may fear the new person to whom his teacher has presented him. He does not know her, what she is like, what she will think of him, what she expects from him, what she "does to" him. Chances are that the

room she takes him to is relatively unfamiliar to him, and he will be uneasy in it. The room used in the public schools frequently serves many functions, and the child may have many different impressions of it from previous experience. Perhaps it is in the basement, far from the rest of the school, which can make him feel isolated and afraid. Perhaps it is also known as the Health Room, and he has experienced unhappy times there when he has hurt himself or had a physical examination.

In addition to his fears regarding a new person and a new locale, he will be anxious about the experience itself. He may wonder why he alone has been singled out. Is this a punishment for something he has done or thought? What is he expected to say and do? This adult says he can say anything he likes here. Such a statement can be very frightening to the child, for he well knows the usual consequences of saying "the wrong things" to his teachers or parents. The worker shows him toys and says he can play here. The child might fear this because it seems inconceivable to him that one could just play in school. He may be full of questions about whether he has to come, how long he has to stay, what the other children will say when they hear about this. It matters little whether the child shows his fears through timidity, belligerence, cooperation, etc. The social worker must have a certainty that the child does have fear, and it is her responsibility to help the child in his attempts to overcome his fears. Certainly she will try to reassure him with her explanations of her role and of the reasons he is with her, and she will speak of her understanding of the way he is feeling about it. She will show him she expects him to be afraid and unwilling to trust her, and that she is willing to let him take his own time in conquering his fears.

The greatest service a worker can give a child in helping him grow comfortable with her and with this new experience is to allow him the chance to overcome anxiety in his own way, a way that has proven its usefulness to him many times before. Her verbal reassurances will probably affect him not a whit; she must prove them as he gains comfort in his own familiar ways. If given the freedom to do this, the child will begin immediately to try to "find" himself, anchor himself in this frightening situation. He will bring with him trusted "friends" that give him a feeling of his own identity and security. One child may speak at length of various members of his family, another of his favorite activities, a third of his friends. Perhaps he will speak of all the scrapes he has been in. The worker can easily recognize that this material helps her know this child as the child sees himself; but let her think twice before grow-

ing impatient at the welter of seemingly inconsequential detail the child presents, for it is through this detail that the child gains security. And an integral part of his gain comes from experiencing a person who does not flinch at tales of his "badness" or statements about how mean his teacher is. He finds she not only isn't shocked by his statements, but she also does not "go tattling on him." He slowly learns that he can do almost anything here, yet he is not allowed to do things that would bring him punishment, e. g., break a window. He comes to understand that this adult is a person with warm, sincere interest in him, who understands how and why he feels things. To his amazement, he realizes he can even get mad at her and she doesn't stop caring about him. He can beat her in games and she won't get mad.

All those growing realizations add up to one idea. She is interested in him. Maybe he is somebody special to her; maybe he is somebody worth while in general. But feelings of doubt probably beset him, and he will want her to prove again and again how she really regards him. He will show curiosity about her and anger toward other children whom she sees. He won't want to share her with others, for fear she may find someone she will care about more than she does him. It takes a long time and many attempts by the worker to prove her sincere concern for him before the child understands that her seeing other children does not mean *his* stature diminishes in her eyes.

All this time the child, as he gains security and trust in the social worker, has been opening himself to her more and more. He has dared to show her what he considers the bad part of himself. Lo and behold, her feeling for him is unchanged. He may sense her approval of something he did, but he never gets any feeling of disapproval of him. More and more he comes to feel that perhaps he isn't as bad a person as he once thought. Hopefully, he finds that failure does not mean loss of affection, for the worker does not expect him to be perfect, but to be himself. As Dr. Ruth Smalley has stated it:

"With you, he has a chance to know himself in a new way—to know himself in the very act of experiencing what he is like through what he is doing with you. . . . This he will let himself do—only if you neither condone nor condemn him. . . . A child can trust himself to be himself with you—to share his shortcomings and fears and hates as well as his loves and longings only if he feels your genuine concern for him as a person, your valuing of him as an individual no matter how far he has strayed from his own or your or anyone else's ideal of behavior."¹

¹ Smalley, Ruth E. "The Significance of Believing—For School Counselors", *Bulletin of the National Association of School Social Workers*, September, 1952, pp. 14-15.

The comment is sometimes made that school social workers allow children to control them, to "twist them around their little fingers." Let us examine this a moment in relation to feelings. We have seen that the child is initially afraid. To continue in a state of anxiety is intolerable for anyone, and any way the child finds of gaining comfort and easing his tension is a good way. Is it a waste of the worker's time to listen as he talks on and on, perhaps about his favorite television movies? Is she not learning about the child, about his problems perhaps, about the things that are important to him, that he likes, that give him security and identity? By listening, is the worker not showing her acceptance of the child and of his need to feel secure in this situation? Yes, the child may be attempting to control the situation, but to what end? In order to feel comfortable, without which feeling the most skillful social worker cannot help a child.

To illustrate further, the child may at times leave early. He may demand that he be allowed to come without being called for, and to leave without accompaniment back to class. He comes late at times. These actions may be ways of proving to himself that he is still the "master of his fate," his way of retaining and achieving his independence. Again, he may be seen as controlling the situation, but he does this to bring himself comfort, and to help himself retain that important feeling of self.

It has also been said that the social worker believes everything the child says. "Children play upon adults' sympathies and social workers fall right in." Is it true that we believe everything the child says? When he tells us his teacher plays favorites and he is not a favorite, when he says everyone picks on him, when he says he always gets the best grades, do we believe him? If people think we always do, then we have failed to explain our beliefs. For as we work with him, it hardly matters if these statements are objectively true or false. He hopes to gain some satisfactions by saying and/or believing these things, and to lie to us and to others means he has had to resort to extreme means to gain these ends. Our concern is with the needs he meets in these ways, for we are convinced that he does not lie because it's fun but because he feels he must. We do not, therefore, necessarily accept his statements, but we accept the needs that motivate his statements. We accept the child behind the lies. We show him we know what he is seeking; we think he has a right to get what he needs, and we will try to help him gain satisfactions without his having to lie for them. Nobody can ever reason or argue a child out of a feeling that everybody picks on him. But show-

ing him you know he is often hurt by others and that you know how hard it is for him when this happens lets him know you understand him: You can accept him whom others seem to reject. When this fact "sinks in", the child no longer has to lie or fantasy or distort to obtain satisfactions from you. Then, and not until then, can he begin turning to more constructive means of obtaining his needed satisfactions.

It can be hard for a child to accept initially some of the statements a school social worker makes to him, as when she tells him he is free to leave early if he wishes or not come on a day when he does not wish to. Regardless of how much the child wants and seems to believe this, he will inevitably attach to this adult the same connotations carried by other school personnel. The worker cannot escape being a person of authority to the child, but she goes beyond simply representing authority by showing acceptance and understanding of the way he feels about the authority of the school and of her. This can help the child achieve constructive attitudes toward authority, thereby helping him in school.

Another feeling arises in telling the child of the worker's plan to talk with his parents and teacher. It seems unfair and unjust for the worker to talk about the child with others without his knowledge. She must inform the child of her intentions and try to help him verbalize his feelings about these visits. When this comes up early in the relationship, the child probably doesn't feel secure enough with her to voice his feelings, but he will almost inevitably show his concern in some way, even when his relations with parents and teacher are wholesome. It is frightening to know that a comparative stranger is discussing him with meaningful people—what is being said? Can the worker be trusted or will she get him into trouble? What will be the reactions of parents and teacher? The child is unable to participate in these visits and consequently feels afraid.

It is the worker's responsibility to help the child overcome his fears by discussing the visit and the child's feelings before and after the visit. Perhaps the child meets such discussion nonchalantly—it isn't very important to him and he drops the subject, or he may show his anxiety through hostility or by returning to earlier activities that proved comforting. The worker may decide to postpone the visit until the child has calmed down a bit, but this can be a harmful practice at times. Until the visit is over, the child will always be "waiting for the axe to fall". Lois French has said, "Mental hygiene *does* recommend easing the burden for children obviously carrying too heavy a load. . . . But from

whence has come this idea that 'mental hygiene' runs ahead of every child to smooth his path and remove all difficulties?"² We cannot and have no wish to keep the child from having his frightened moments, for he needs these in order to grow. But we can help him handle frightening experiences, and we can do this in relation to our visits.

Often a worker hesitates to discuss her teacher and parent contacts with the child fearing this will mean to the child that the worker is "in league" with others against him. Such fear implies a belief that the child and teacher are "at war" with one another, and the worker must take sides. It may be hard for a child to believe his teacher likes him and wants to help him, but if the worker believes this, she can enable the child to feel it too. The very fact that the teacher excuses the child from class to come for his interviews is a positive fact, showing the teacher's wish to have the child receive help. The worker has no need to be "on the side" of either child or teacher or parent, for all are working together. Thus, it is our right and our responsibility to work with his parents and his teachers in helping them to help him. If the worker is clear about her responsibilities and skillful and helpful in carrying them out, each visit and talk will grow less threatening to the child, and he will have learned that he can handle situations even when they seem dangerous to him.

What of the teacher's feelings in working with the school social worker? The teacher who refers a child for help may feel genuine concern for the child's problems and may have real recognition of his own limitations in helping the youngster, limitations imposed by his training, responsibilities, function, and perhaps his own personality. He may present a feeling of having tried everything with the child to no avail. It is very discouraging and hurts a person's ego to feel he cannot help a child entrusted to his care. Although a teacher may understand the limitations he is faced with in helping one child in a class, he may nevertheless experience feelings of guilt and inadequacy. The worker must help him work through these feelings so that he can help the child as much as possible in a classroom situation.

The worker must help a teacher who does not refer children obviously needing help, or one who refers children negatively. Some teachers seem to "turn a deaf ear" to a child's pleas for sympathy, feeling they too had a "hard life" but managed to survive without help.

² French, Lois Meredith. "Where We Went Wrong in Mental Hygiene," *Bulletin of the National Association of School Social Workers*, March, 1953, p. 15.

Other teachers hold negative attitudes toward school social work which may interfere with their own helpfulness with children. Do they have misconceptions of the service, perhaps based upon inadequate information or past experience with not very skillful workers? Do they fear being supplanted by a worker, having the worker take over and alienate the child from them? Teachers often feel they receive no help with their own difficulties in handling a child; "the worker asks many questions but seldom offers any information." Other teachers feel that workers regard them as insensitive, uninformed about children's feelings; for example, a child may sometime return to class in a disturbed state after seeing the worker and effectively disrupt the entire class. If the teacher mentions this to the worker, he sometimes feels she regards him as inflexible or as lacking understanding.

On the other hand, a teacher may seem to "wash his hands" of the child and, in effect, place the total responsibility for helping the youngster onto the worker. Although it is doubtless gratifying to a worker to regard herself as "all things to a child," she fails to fulfill her responsibilities if she falls in with this attitude.

Teachers can effectively apply a bandage to a child's cut finger but would seek the school nurse's help for a child with a severe stomach ache. It follows that teachers can effectively help children with school problems which fall within their training and competence, but need a school social worker's help in working with deeper or more difficult problems. When teachers fail to recognize this as sheer common sense, it is the worker's responsibility to help them understand it and to let them know the worker does not consider them incompetent.

Their misunderstandings of school social work help must be corrected and any feelings of resentment understood and accepted if and when they rise if teachers are to make constructive, effective use of our service. It is a wise worker who realizes her own limitations in terms of her time spent with and meaning to the child in relation to the other people in his environment. The worker who spends one weekly half hour with a child may multiply her help to him by 50 simply by helping the teacher help him in the 50 weekly half hours the child is with him.

In working with teachers, we must remember that they are members of another profession and not our clients. I wonder if we are clear as to just what is meant by that statement. Teachers technically are not presenting a problem of their own but of a child. However, if the child's problem did not disturb them in some way, would they refer the youngster for help? At the very least, they are requesting our aid to help

themselves better understand the child so that they can help him more effectively in the classroom. And so we do not give the caseworker service we offer to clients, but we do help teachers understand the child and find ways in which they can help the child.

The concept of respecting teachers' professional training and responsibilities has not been lost here. Teachers themselves often create confusion in this area by asking a worker, "What shall I do? How can I help this child?" The social worker who attempts specific answers to such questions has confused her function. Social caseworkers are trained to help a child through a one-to-one relationship, focusing entirely upon one child. Can a worker possibly expect her methods to be applicable in a classroom situation? Imagine the loss to 29 other children in a class of 30 if the teacher focused on one child alone, even assuming this to be possible. The teacher is responsible to the entire class, responsible for teaching certain material, skills, etc. He is also responsible for perceiving how much each child acquires of this, and for helping the child whose failure to grasp the educational content is the result of an educational problem. His responsibility to the child whose failure is caused by an emotional problem lies in seeking and using the help of a person trained to help the child with that problem.

Once the worker has gained some understanding of a youngster's needs and lack of satisfactions, she knows how to help to meet these needs through a casework relationship. But she does not know how to meet them while teaching a class. It might sometimes be valid for the worker to suggest methods other teachers have found effective, leaving this teacher free to accept, modify, or reject them to his own degree of comfort. But it is utterly invalid to suggest methods to a teacher which are effective in a casework relationship. If workers would never forget this and always act accordingly, the frequent fear teachers express of being supplanted by a worker would disappear, as they learn that teacher and worker each help the child through very different kinds of relationships.

Now, what does it really mean to supplement rather than supplant the teacher's role? It means to help the teacher understand the child's needs, his classroom behavior as his attempts to gain his needed satisfactions, his home situation in the light of how far and in what ways these needs are met or unmet. The worker also helps the teacher understand his own place in the child's life and accept the responsibility that accompanies this position.

If we have fulfilled the above directives to the best of our abilities, then we have helped the teacher see beyond the child's behavior to the real child who is struggling for security. The "how" of helping to ease the child's struggle in a classroom situation consists of methods and techniques of teaching, not of social work. Thus, by truly understanding their own abilities and limitations, and supplementing rather than supplanting the teacher's role with the child, workers can prevent confusion and help eliminate discouraged, hostile, resentful feelings teachers have toward them.

It is quite obvious that the above discussion applies equally in our work with parents. Many parents, like teachers, in their eagerness to cooperate and gain help, regard the school social worker as an "expert". They will place themselves entirely in her hands with such questions as, "What shall I do? How can I handle this?" A worker has again misunderstood her function if she tries to give specific answers to these questions. No degree of empathy, no amount of knowledge gleaned from classes and books or from personal experience can enable her to suggest the best methods a particular parent could use. For she is not the parent asking the question, and she is not the parent of this particular child. Despite the fact that parent and worker both engage in a one-to-one relationship with a child, the parent-child relationship and casework relationship are different for many reasons. The main difference lies in the fact that the parent, not the worker, has been the child's main source of nourishment, physical and emotional, throughout his life. Here again, the worker supplements the parents' role by helping to meet the child's needs and by helping the parent understand and meet these needs; she does not and indeed cannot supplant the parent's role.

The worker's function in work with parents is very similar to her work with teachers. She must understand and accept the parents' feelings toward the need for and use of help. If teachers feel inadequate because they cannot help a child, or guilty for their participation in his problems, how much more intense are these same feelings when manifested by parents? Knowing their child is regarded by the school as an unhappy child immediately provokes anxiety in parents. They may show this by their quickness to deny any problems in the child, or by speaking of their discouragement or expressing guilt feelings. Perhaps they project the cause of the trouble onto heredity—"He's just like his father," says a mother, thereby trying to absolve herself from any responsibility for his behavior. Or perhaps a parent blames the child's problems on his past history, his environment, or his friends. Regardless of the means

used, the worker must understand them as indications of a parent's anxiety and must help the parent work through these until he can comfortably assume responsibility for helping his child at the present time. Although such defenses may seem totally negative, the worker should accept them as indications of the parent's involvement in helping the child, for the very fact that the parent has taken time to see her indicates his own recognition of difficulty.

A worker must be aware of a parent's uneasiness in "turning his child over to a stranger". It is natural and desirable for a parent to be concerned about the kind of person the worker is and the way in which she works. The parent gains sufficient understanding of the worker to ease his anxiety through working directly with her. It is of utmost importance that the worker help the parent understand this helping process as a teamwork operation of child, parent, teacher, and worker, with each assuming his appropriate responsibility and fulfilling his appropriate role. The parent must see the worker as an aide rather than a rival, and it behooves the worker to help the parent reach this understanding. Would consistent adherence to this principle not help overcome anxious and hostile feelings of parents toward workers as was suggested in working with teachers?

Outlined above are some of the feelings of children, teachers, and parents who use the service of the school social worker. In addition to her tasks of gaining awareness of these feelings and skill in helping people with them, she will also have the task of meeting many criticisms of her work from parents, teachers, administrators, etc. The conscientious worker will hear these criticisms and examine her own feelings as to their validity. She must be able to appraise her work realistically and objectively and emerge with convictions as to the value of the methods which are criticized. It is only after this appraisal that she can change her practice if she feels the criticisms to be valid, or help her critics understand her methods if she feels the criticisms to be invalid. Children expect adults to be "wise" and strong. They are frightened when they do not find adults this way. They cannot draw strength from the strength of the worker if she, herself, is uncertain of the merits of her statements and actions. This is not to say that a worker should be dogmatic or inflexible. It is to say that she must be certain of the value of her statements and actions, and her certainty must stem from honest examination of her purposes and methods and beliefs.

A Counseling Teacher Looks at Her First Year of Training and Experience

FOREWORD:

The following article was written by Miss Fran Dortort, counseling teacher in the McKinley School. It was sent, as a letter, to Dr. Hoyer, Superintendent of Schools, who maintains a strong interest in the in-service training program for counseling teachers and has given generously of his time to meet with each new class at intervals during the eighteen months when class work, actual work as a counseling teacher, and casework supervision are closely coordinated.

Dr. Hoyer thought that Miss Dortort's letter to him showed "a very real understanding of the counseling process" and he sent it to the Editor of the NEWSLETTER of the Philadelphia Teachers Association. It was published in the December, 1953, issue under the title, "Counseling Teacher Finds Treasure in Her First Year".

The responsibility for the training program for elementary school teachers who are selected to be counseling teachers is carried by the Assistant Director and by two supervisors of school counseling—Miss Margaret Carson and Miss Marion Pierce, formerly members of the staff of the White-Williams Foundation and now supervisors in the Division of Pupil Personnel and Counseling staff. The Director of the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic teaches the class, "Psychological Growth Problems of Children". The executives or supervisors of social agencies participate in the class, "Counseling and the Community".

The term, counseling teacher, is used to denote the staff member who carries school social work responsibilities in the Philadelphia elementary schools.

EMILIE RANNELLS,

Assistant Director,
Division of Pupil Personnel and Counseling,
Board of Public Education,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

It has been a good year! As I look back to that exciting day in February, 1952, when Miss Thorp offered me the counseling appointment it is again comparable to the receipt of a wonderful gift.

At first the "package" seemed very large and clumsily shaped and I was very awkward in my handling. It was so securely wrapped up in the training program I had some difficulty in getting to the contents. Sometimes the "string" became tangled and snarled. Sometimes I hurt my fingers. At one point I became suddenly possessed by the fear that it might contain dynamite. But my teachers "stood by" to direct my efforts. And my supervisor was always on hand to encourage and support me.

As I worked my way through the first wrapping I found that the "package" consisted of a number of smaller boxes. I haven't opened them all yet. But so far I've found,

1. A pair of jeweled "insights and empathies". These are very rare and quite expensive. But a counselor can't have too many pairs.

2. I found a bracelet of patience. The lock is a little "stiff", sometimes it sticks. And sometimes I'm afraid it will snap. And it requires a lot of polishing to keep it bright.

3. Right now I'm trying to match it up with one of self discipline. This seems hard to find. Sometimes I think I have it. But when I wear them together they seem to clash. But I haven't given up.

4. I've had better luck with a sense of humor. I've tried it on and it looks grand. I just hope it wears well.

5. Nowhere in the box did I find a "halo" nor do I expect to do so.

6. But I did find a pair of peculiar eye glasses. At first I disregarded them. I felt my "vision" was pretty good. The lenses were ground to crystal clear understanding and they brought so many things into sharp focus that they seemed to blur my vision with the glare.

But the frames were intriguing and won me over. They were made of regard for the individual and respect for human dignity. I had seen this material used in other ways. But in combination with these magic lenses its value was unsurpassed, and attained a sort of a fourth dimensional power of penetration.

The glasses neither magnified nor minimized. They showed things as they really are. Through them I observed with awe the wonder of even small children reorganizing their inner strengths to rechannel energy into constructive adjustment. And I witnessed the birth of self respect out of despair and defeat.

Humility proved to be the only polishing cloth that neither scratched nor marred the perfection of the lenses. I'm lucky to have a good supply on hand. The smaller boxes in the package were well padded with it.

I haven't finished unwrapping yet. Each day I discover some new, small gift. Please God, with these sample contents in mind, I will continue to find many more.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in a professional organization is a strengthening factor for the individual practicing within that profession. This is as true for the school social worker as it has long been for members of other professions. National Association of School Social Workers has members in 38 states and in Hawaii, Puerto Rico and India.

All members receive the National Association of School Social Workers Bulletin and other materials such as Newsletter, book lists, conference programs, notices, and other publicity. Membership is determined by the training and experience of the applicant.

Applications for membership and a statement of membership requirements may be obtained from the Membership Chairman, Mrs. Helen Roell, Indianapolis Public Schools, 150 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

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Copies of some issues of N. A. S. S. W. Bulletins from 1946 to the present are available at the National Office in limited quantities.

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Changes of address should reach the NATIONAL OFFICE as soon as possible.

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The Editorial Committee would like to publish material representative of practice throughout the country. Persons interested in having articles considered for publication are encouraged to submit them to the Editor of the *Bulletin*.

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